

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ACDA-10 L-01 H-01 INR-05
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C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1082

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, IC
SUBJECT: ICELANDIC POLITICAL SITUATION: PRIME MINISTER'S
EXPECTATIONS

REF: REYKJAVIK 1075 DTG 161730Z AUG 78

1. DURING FAREWELL COURTESY CALL BY ADMIRAL BERNSTEIN, DEPARTING COMMANDER, ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE, AUGUST 17, ON PRIME MINISTER GEIR HALLGRIMSSON, I ASKED PRIME MINISTER FOR HIS IMPRESSIONS OF CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE EXPECTED "LEFTIST" GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED BY END OF NEXT WEEK. WHEN I ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BE MAJORITY GOVERNMENT, I.E., ONE CONSISTING OF PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE (PA), SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (SDP), AND PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PP), HE REPLIED IN AFFIRMATIVE.

2. PRIME MINISTER WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT KNOW HOW MINISTERIAL SEATS WOULD BE DIVIDED AND HE REFERRED TO POSSIBILITY THAT OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN, PRESENT MINISTER OF JUSTICE, WHO WAS PRIME MINISTER IN LEFTIST GOVERNMENT OF 1971-74, MIGHT AGAIN BECOME PRIME MINISTER. AS FOR FOREIGN MINISTRY, PRIME MINISTER NOTED STATEMENT BY SDP
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CHAIRMAN BENEDIKT GRONDAL THAT HIS PARTY WOULD NOT AGREE TO IT GOING TO PA.

3. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE DID NOT THINK "LEFTIST" GOVERNMENT WOULD ATTEMPT TO CHANGE ICELAND'S PRESENT FOREIGN POLICY "AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING". HE NOTED THAT SDP OFFICIALLY SUPPORTS THAT POLICY AND THAT THERE ARE NUMEROUS MEMBERS OF

SDP WHO FAVOR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP OF ICELAND IN NATO AND
CONTINUED PRESENCE OF IDF. SPEAKING AS THOUGH HE ALREADY
SAW HIMSELF AS LEADER OF OPPOSITION, PRIME MINISTER
EXPRESSED HOPE THAT HE WOULD STILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH EMBASSY AND ICELAND DEFENSE
FORCE IF POLITICAL SITUATION EVOLVES ALONG LINES HE EXPECTS.
BLAKE

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